

Lives of Guerrillas in the East Timor Mountains

A Band of Guerrillas Meet a Crying Girl

Encounter between the guerrilla captain and the girl's family. Tears. Crises. Tribulations. Bloodshed. Combat. The right to live. And the determination for solidarity.

Around Falintil the Banner

Encounter at Secaro on July 11, 1991. Members of the first unit who all belong to the Falintil. The purpose of their resistance is to rescue their country and its people.

Guerrilla Units Meet for Talks

First, let's look back the years from 1979 to 1991, and see what has happened to the our people during this period. Between 1979 and 1983, a large number of guerrillas were stationed on the east side of the road, and many men were lost. Both old and young, including small children, were murdered. The number of our guerrillas was reduced to 20. Nevertheless, our determination to fight on for our fatherland remained unchanged. Either death or victory...we have no other choice. That's the situation we face today.

Ashikawa: An old man who entered the mountains with his children to join the resistance. He has seen dozens of comrades killed before his eyes.

Aroko: A guerrilla member who gives a brief report on the period from 1979 to 1991. From 1979 to 1983, the enemy conducted large-scale military operation, forcing us reluctant Timorese to resist. From 1983 to 1986, our enemies deployed all available military forces, including tanks, bombers and artillery. Our guerrillas took these to increase their weaponry. This Unit One, was very effective.

Since 1986 onward, the enemy has given up on large-scale operations and switched to guerrilla combat. Their strategy was to use units of about 20 guerrillas for quick and short attacks. The three divisions in the first unit quickly lost members and goods. It was as if they had their enemies in the knapsacks strapped on their backs. Although the Falintil, suffered from considerable losses in guerrillas and weapons, our will to fight is not affected.

Shanana Gusmao

I am prepared to show you in 90 minutes the difficult life of our guerrillas which has lasted for 16 years. In short, these 16 years contain the history of a holocaust which has been largely ignored. But all this while we have kept our determination and hope for victory burning in our hearts.

First of all, I would like to dedicate this film to various Portuguese organizations and would also like to ask

for their continued or even increased consideration for the oppressed Maubere people, by fulfilling the historical, legal, moral and political responsibilities they owe these people.

My second wish is for the Portuguese to cultivate a stronger sense of solidarity with the Maubere people.

My appeal to journalists is that they report more on the Maubere people and reveal their tragedy to the rest of the world.

Last but not least, I send my best wishes and love to the people in the solidarity group and look forward to their full support and their activities in our behalf.

"Shanana Gusmao's Message to Japan"

It is a great pleasure for me to send a message to Japanese solidarity friends in various parts of the country as a member of the National Council of Maubere Resistance and its National Liberation Army or Falintil, which are both in great need of help from Japan.

I would like to take this opportunity to send greetings to Japanese politicians, political parties and individuals in the hope that they will come to understand our tribulations, which have caused us to take action to regain peace, justice and freedom. I am grateful that many Japanese are already aware of our situation. I highly value Japan's efforts to acknowledge such a small and helpless Southeast Asian tribe in the international community.

The great changes taking place in the world today are truly astonishing. With the change in people's ethical values and political leaders' attitudes, the United Nations Charter -- which provides common principles for the entire world regarding human existence as well as the status of individuals, tribes and nations -- has come closer to full realization. But unfortunately, many problems still remain unsolved as economic development is given priority.

The recent Gulf War became the focus of world attention as many countries got together to lay bare the immoral

political behavior of one dictator so as to protect the interests of the international community.

The UN intervention in the Iran-Iraq War -- as well as conflicts in Namibia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Angola, El Salvador and other countries -- was a typical example of the UN mission to maintain peace and justice among nations. The latest UN report advocated a bold new standard for its activities and struck us as revolutionary; it manifested that true freedom does not exist without justice.

It was the UN resolutions that played the decisive role in the retreat of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and providing humane help to the Kurdish refugees in its aftermath. This UN action has had a far-reaching effect on the world politics but this also revealed that the United Nations have two ways of dealing with things. In other words, all the nations are not treated equally.

Here is something I would like you, the Japanese people, to know in this regard:

The UN Security Council dealt with the East Timor issue in its resolutions No.385 (issued on December 22, 1975) and No. 389 (issued on April 22, 1976).

The main items found common to these two resolutions are as follows:

The UN Resolution No.1514 taken up at the General Assembly recognizes East Timor as the territory of the East Timorese and they have a right of self decision. The resolution also stipulates that all Indonesian troops shall immediately withdraw from East Timor and urges all the countries concerned to find a peaceful solution to the problem and to offer wholehearted cooperation to the United Nations so as to facilitate the decolonization of the territory.

The UNGA Resolutions adopted from 1976 to 1982 confirmed the right of the East Timorese to decide the independence by themselves.

The additional three resolutions, 37/30, from 1980 to 1982 also recognize that the Maubere people have the right to decide their future course according to their own will.

All these United Nations General Assembly resolutions were based on the precept that the East Timor Suzerian state belonged to Portugal and rejected the Indonesian government's propaganda that East Timor is under the rule of Indonesia.

More than 15 years have passed since we began to reveal the lies of the Indonesian government's propaganda. We have continued to maintain our resistance against the Indonesian troops that occupied our land.

In the case of Kuwait, the United Nations took action to counter the invasion of that country and its military action

forced Iraq to obey the resolutions of the UN Security Council.

The unprecedented military unity of the multi-national forces and their operations were extremely costly and Japan was obliged to provide an enormous financial contribution.

Regarding East Timor, however, Japan's position has always been that of an outsider towards Indonesia, the nation which acted criminally by invading us. Japan sided with the United States, Canada and other countries who have systematically supported the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. This is because each of Japan's governments have put their country's economic benefits ahead of the pursuit of morals, justice, human rights and freedom that are internationally agreed to.

We have endured more than 15 years of political injustice by powerful countries, opportunism by politicians and a hypocritical conspiracy among the international community. In the past 15 and a half years we have borne the responsibility of informing the world's minor tribal peoples about the international resolutions that guarantee the right of racial independence and self-determination.

Yes, more than 15 years have passed since we decided to prove to the world that any tribe, however powerless it may be, will not surrender to the oppression of powerful nations

and will demand its rights to the end despite its defenseless state, as long as there is a belief in the need for justice.

Forty years ago Japan also caused much pain and bloodshed to the Maubere people but today we are very much impressed by Japan's declaration of intent to compensate for its past errors.

We are not judges of history. What has happened has happened. Japan's younger generation, born since the Second World War from 1942 to 1945, recognizes the moral and political obligations its country owes East Timor. This gives a mixed feeling to the modern day generation of East Timorese because they know that successive Japanese governments have not obeyed international rule to support a peaceful co-existence between nations and minor tribes. Instead they have preferred to develop an economic relationship with Indonesia while we have continued to suffer our agony.

However, the Timor-Gap Treaty signed between Australia and Indonesia and the visit of a Portuguese premier to East Timor have helped us understand the Japanese government's improved and more responsible attitude toward us. Although we are happy about these moves as the first signs of support for Portugal we still have our reservations. We sincerely hope that the Japanese government will back up its new

attitude with definite actions by obeying international rules set by the United Nations.

Now I would like to appeal to all the influential Japanese: please act wisely and support justice and peace. Support Prime Minister Kaifu, who promised an immediate solution to the conflict, so that he can fulfill his commitment. Please part with the indifferent attitude which you have shown up to now, not to mention, supporting the conspiracy that denies the East Timorese their right to independence and self-determination.

Through their 15 and a half years of lonely resistance activities the Maubere people have learned that international solidarity reflects man's conscience against injustice, colonial oppression and various other infringements of human rights.

The situation in the world is rapidly and radically changing. Many tribal conflicts have been solved or improved after recognizing the basic right of all people to self-determination. In view of this I strongly feel that justice will ultimately prevail for the people of East Timor and the people will not be denied their rights.

I dare say those who ignored the possibility of independence for East Timor until yesterday and remain hypocrites today are supporters of a policy of massacre.

From a political viewpoint, popular resistance movements and the solidarity of tribal movements in East Timor clearly indicate that the Maubere people are politically mature and well aware of their desires, hopes and problems. Therefore they are fully prepared to decide their own future.

Economically, Timor-Gap has proved that an independent East Timor is capable of providing its people with a comfortable life. Its magnificent but undeveloped coastline is a treasure house of natural resources which promises its people a bright future. At present, Japan is investing an enormous amount of capital in Indonesia. A liberated and independent East Timor is all set to welcome such investment, including businesses that are now devoted to Indonesia.

Many governments in the world which supported the mass slaughter committed by Indonesians in East Timor should be ashamed of themselves. The United Nations, also, should feel responsible for allowing the resolutions on the Indonesia-East Timor issue, adopted by its Security Council and General Assembly, to be completely ignored and allowing this violation of international rules to continue for such a long time. Today all the people of the world agree to

Indonesia's participation in the solution of the Cambodian issue, take delight in the liberation of Kuwait and praise President Suharto's statement on the Palestinian issue. But if the East Timor issue entrusted to the hands of UN Secretary General De Cuellar, based on the 37/30 resolution, does not show any sign of substantial progress before the expiration of his second term in office, I certainly hope that the report deals only with the improvement of the human rights issue.

Indonesia is continuing to deploy large-scale military offensives against us, Falintil, throughout East Timor. In order to fortify the police network in the suburbs and the settlement centers in the hinterlands, tens of thousands of Timorese are being forced to move.

Again, for the past 15 and a half years, we have resisted the shameful invasion of East Timor which began on December 7, 1975 and all the outside powers that have lent a helping hand to this criminal act of occupation.

We, the Maubere people, request the Japanese parliament to continue to support our fight to regain our due rights. I plead you to urge the UN Secretary General to fulfill all the articles approved in Resolution 37/30.

I would also like to ask the Japanese government, knowing that it has changed its stance towards the East Timor

issue, to talk to Indonesia and have it agree to hold a dialogue with us to stop their military operations in East Timor in compliance with UN regulations. I believe the first step towards a political solution to this conflict is to send a delegation of Portuguese parliament members to East Timor. I therefore seek the support of the Japanese government to help the Portuguese government and UN Secretary General recognize this need.

I very much hope, too, that the solidarity of the groups supporting East Timor in Japan will strengthen and that their activities will win better understanding and deeper sympathy among the Japanese public.

On March 25 this year, an international delegation of politicians from East Timor met with the UN Secretary General and confirmed that the UN resolutions regarding East Timor are still valid and that the Secretary General is ready to take a more practical approach toward this problem. This, I hope, will encourage the Japanese government to increase its efforts to urge its people to be concerned about the East Timor issue and take unified action on it. I would like to emphasize that mere political statements are not enough. What we need is action.

Long live international solidarity! Long live the Maubere people's fight for justice! Our fight will continue until we either win back our fatherland or die. But we are convinced our victory will come if we fight to the end.

Shanana Gusmao, Supreme Commander, speaking at the general headquarters of the Tribal Advisory Committee of the Maubere Resistance on May 20, 1991.